



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE
PENNSYLVANIA MAGAZINE
OF
HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY.

VOL. XXVI.

1902.

No. 1.

COMMODORE JOHN HAZLEWOOD, COMMANDER OF
THE PENNSYLVANIA NAVY IN THE REVOLUTION.

BY JOSIAH GRANVILLE LEACH, ESQ.

John Hazlewood, one of the most noted naval officers of Pennsylvania in the Revolutionary War, was born in England about 1726, and became a mariner, and in early life settled in Philadelphia. In 1753 he was in command of the ship "Susanna and Molly;" in 1762, of the ship "Greyhound;" in 1763, of the brig "Monckton;" in 1771, of the ship "Sally;" and in 1774, of the ship "Rebecca." The latter was one of the largest ships sailing at that time from Philadelphia, and in all of these Captain Hazlewood traded with foreign ports, chiefly those of England. When, at the outbreak of the Revolution, it became necessary to organize naval forces for the defence of the Colonies, recourse was had for naval commanders to the captains in the merchant marine, there being none others at hand whose training in any way fitted them for such service. Philadelphia was exceptionally fortunate at this period in having among her citizens many sea-captains of large experience, and she furnished for service in that great struggle a number of men who made records that would have done honor to the most thoroughly trained officers in the best naval forces of the

world. Of such may be mentioned Stephen Decatur, Thomas Truxton, Charles Biddle, Nicholas Biddle, John Barry, and John Hazlewood.

Commodore Hazlewood's earliest known service in the Revolution was in 1775. In July of that year the Pennsylvania Committee of Safety adopted measures for the defence of the Delaware River. The naval part of the defence was the construction of war-ships, floating batteries, and fire-rafts, and the sinking of obstructions in the river, known as *chevaux-de-frise*. By December 28 ten fire-rafts had been constructed, and Captain Hazlewood was appointed commander over the fleet of rafts. In May following he was selected by the Council of Safety "to survey the river from Billingsport to Fort Island," and also "to Survey the Channel on the East side of the Barr opposite to Fort Island," and in June he was ordered to "construct and immediately employ persons for building an additional Guard Boat for the use of this Province," and on the 21st of that month the Council of Safety

Resolved, That John Hazelwood, Esq'r, be appointed Captain and superintendant of the Fire Vessels & Fire Rafts, and to the Guard Boats, and that he be allowed for his Services 36 Dollars p month & 4 Rations, to commence the day of his first appointment, being the 28th of December last.

In July, 1776, he was one of the "committee" of three sent to Poughkeepsie, New York, to devise plans for the obstruction of the navigation of the North River by fire-vessels similar to those in use on the Delaware, and the "Secret Committee" mentions that Captain Hazlewood had "fitted out a fire vessel in a martial manner," while the Convention of the Representatives of the State of New York voted him the thanks of that body and the sum of three hundred dollars for services rendered in this direction, and on October 10, 1776, the Continental Congress recognized the importance of this service by voting him and the two other members of his committee "pay for preparing six sail of fire

ships at New York." At a later date, precisely when is not known, he was promoted to commodore in the Pennsylvania navy, and he is so styled in the proceedings of the Supreme Executive Council, August 26, 1777, when the Naval Board recommended to the Council that they make Commodore Hazlewood "an extra allowance for his great trouble and extra attention" in "attending and directing fire ships and rafts," to which the Council responded by ordering that he be paid one hundred pounds for his "extra service," etc. Eleven days later the Council bore strong testimony to the eminent fitness of Commodore Hazlewood for the highest rank in its navy by placing him in actual command of the naval force of the State. Howe's army was at this time advancing into Pennsylvania and his fleet was expected up the Delaware, and the Council

Ordered, That on the present emergency, when the Enemies' Army endeavouring to penetrate to this City, may be aided by a Fleet in the Delaware, the actual Command of the Naval force be committed to John Hazlewood, Esq'r, as Commodore in this Department, on account of the Age & infirmities of Tho's Seymour, Esq'r, his superior Officer, as it is manifest to Council that Commodore Seymour, in the present State of his Health, cannot be capable of that vigour & activity which are essential to the service at this time of danger, in which the most strenuous efforts of the stoutest will be necessary.

On the day this appointment was made the Council informed the State Navy Board of their action in the following words:

As Council cannot justify to themselves or to the State, that the actual command of the naval force should continue in the hands of Commodore Seymour, whose health is very uncertain and whose age is far advanced, they have resolved to commit the real command of the same to Commodore Hazlewood, as you will find by a copy of the resolve inclosed.

Five days later the battle of Brandywine was fought, and on the 26th of that month (September) the British entered Philadelphia. A portion of the British fleet entered the Delaware, and shortly afterwards Lord Howe sent a flag to

Commodore Hazlewood, demanding a surrender of the Pennsylvania fleet, promising his Majesty's pardon should he comply with the demand. The commodore replied that he would not give up the fleet, but would defend it to the last, which reply came to the attention of Congress, and that body, on October 17, adopted the following resolution :

Resolved, That Congress highly approve of the brave and spirited conduct of Commodore Hazlewood, and the other officers and men concerned in the defence of the river Delaware, and of their undaunted perseverance and resolution to maintain that pass to the City of Philadelphia to the utmost extremity.

On October 22 a British land force, under Count Dunop, made an attack on Fort Mercer, at Red Bank, and at the first sound of the count's cannon, the British fleet, consisting of the "Augusta," a new sixty-four-gun vessel, the "Roebuck," forty-four guns, the "Merlin" frigate, the "Liverpool," and several other vessels, attempted to make its way up the river to assist the attack. The fleet under Commodore Hazlewood immediately engaged these vessels and drove them back. Going down the river, the "Augusta" and "Merlin" ran aground, hearing of which, the commodore hoisted signal to engage, and the action soon became general. The "Augusta" took fire and blew up and the "Merlin" was burned by her crew. Congress took early notice of this event, and honored the commodore with a sword for his gallant conduct, as appears from its vote of November 4, 1777 :

Resolved, That Congress have an high sense of the merit of Commodore Hazlewood, commander of the naval force in the Delaware river, in the service of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and of the officers and men under his command, in their late gallant defence of their country against the British fleet, whereby two of their men of war were destroyed, and four others compelled to retire ; and that an elegant sword be provided by the marine committee, and presented to Commodore Hazlewood.

A land attack by the British for the reduction of Fort Mifflin soon followed, during which the fleet was actively

engaged, losing in one day thirty-eight men killed and wounded. The fort was captured on November 16 and on the 18th a council of war convened by General Washington was held on one of the commodore's ships, at which Major-General Arthur St. Clair, Major-General Baron de Kalb, and Brigadier-General Henry Knox recommended that the commodore "with the first favorable wind to attempt passing up the River past the City of Philadelphia to such place as he judge proper." This was accomplished on the night of the 21st, when twelve armed boats, thirteen galleys, province sloop, ammunition sloop, convention brig and accommodation sloop, one provision sloop, two flats with stores, and one schooner passed the city without having a shot fired at them, and took refuge in the Delaware above Burlington. The history of this fleet from this time forward is briefly told in the "Pennsylvania Archives," Second Series, Vol. I. pp. 235, 236, and an interesting account of its previous service and engagements, after the British came up the Delaware, is told in a letter from Commodore Hazlewood to President Thomas Wharton, Jr., under date of December 1, 1777, printed in the "Pennsylvania Archives," Second Series, Vol. VI. pp. 47-50. In August, 1778, the Assembly of Pennsylvania determined that a large State navy was unnecessary, and recommended that the greater part of the same be disbanded. Such disbandment followed, and Commodore Hazlewood—he being the last to hold that rank—and many others officers were discharged.

In the summer of 1779 Commodore Hazlewood was one of the committee of citizens chosen at a public meeting in Philadelphia to raise, by house-to-house subscription, money for the support of the army. In 1780 he was appointed Commissary of Purchases for the Continental army, in the city of Philadelphia, an office of great trust, involving the handling of large sums of money. On one occasion (September 7, 1780) the Supreme Executive Council ordered that an order be drawn in his favor for one hundred thou-

sand pounds for purchasing supplies. In December of the same year he was appointed Receiver of Provisions for the Pennsylvania militia.

Of Commodore Hazlewood's life subsequent to the war but little is known, except that April 11, 1785, he was chosen one of the port wardens of Philadelphia. In 1772 he was one of the founders of the St. George Society, and from 1779 until 1783 was a vestryman of Christ Church. He died at Philadelphia on the 1st or 2d of March, 1800, aged seventy-four, and was buried on the 3d of that month in the graveyard of St. Peter's Church.

Captain Charles Willson Peale, artist and patriot, thought Commodore Hazlewood worthy for his collection of American heroes, and the portrait painted by him was purchased by the city of Philadelphia and placed in Independence Hall.

Commodore Hazlewood married (1), August 10, 1753, Mary, daughter of Charles Edgar, a merchant of Philadelphia. She died December 1, 1769, aged thirty-six years, and he married (2), July 17, 1771, Esther, widow of Samuel Leacock and daughter of Plunkett Fleeson, Esq. The children that he is known to have had are,—

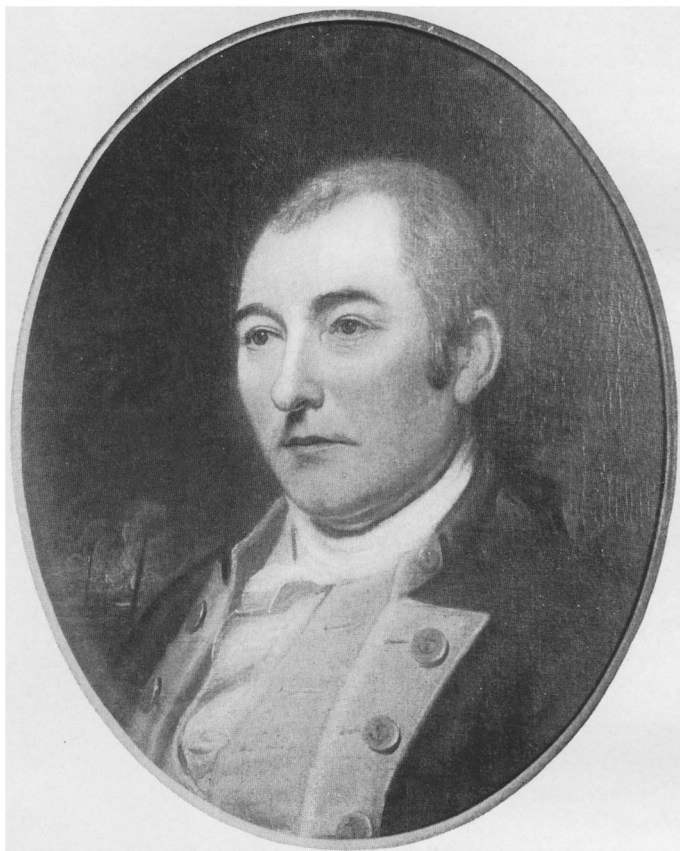
1. Thomas Hazlewood, born August 30, 1757; died in 1788; was captain in the Pennsylvania navy in the Revolution.

2. Frances Hazlewood, born January 15, 1775; died young.

3. Susan Hazlewood, died September 19, 1794.

4. John Hazlewood, a lieutenant in the artillery company raised in Philadelphia in 1794, and in service in the Western Expedition of that year. He survived his father only a few weeks, and was buried in St. Peter's church ground, April 13, 1800.

5. Ann Hazlewood, living at the date of her father's will, February 22, 1799.



John Hazelwood